

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

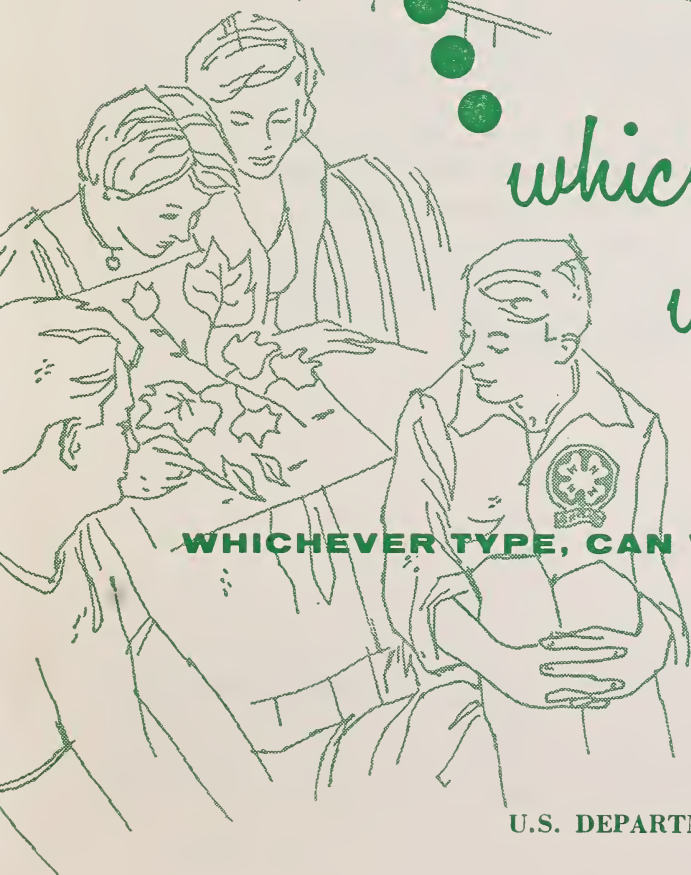
A 884 G+0 #426
#426

School or Community

4-H CLUB



which shall
we have?



WHICHEVER TYPE, CAN WE IMPROVE IT?

PA 426

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Federal Extension Service

Purpose

This booklet is written for county 4-H agents, their 4-H advisory committees, and for State 4-H specialists. The objective is to help you readers decide whether school or nonschool clubs are most desirable for your situations. It should also help you improve 4-H Club work in your county or State, regardless of the kind of organization.

Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout this report.

A *school-type club* or a *school club* is one that holds regular meetings in a school during the school day.

A *community-type club*, or a *community club* (called a nonschool club also) either meets away from the school or meets in the school building during evenings or on nonschool days.

A few 4-H Clubs in West Virginia are a combination of these two types. They were not included in either phase of the study.

Issued September 1960

Source of Data

This booklet is based on findings from a study of 4-H Club work in Barbour County, W. Va., in 1953. The conclusions drawn, questions raised, and implications stated are our own work as authors. They are approved by Leonard M. Sizer, Experiment Station rural sociologist, and C. P. Dorsey, State 4-H Club Leader, Agricultural Extension Service, West Virginia University.

Data for this study were collected from 40 4-H Clubs and 320 4-H Club members. They are reported in Bulletin 427, May 1959, published by the West Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station: *The Learning Experiences of Youth Groups*, by Leonard M. Sizer, Ward F. Porter, Charles C. Anderson, and Laurel K. Sabrosky.

The study was planned to compare the educational opportunities, "learning experiences," offered to the members by the two types of 4-H Clubs. This plan was based on the assumption that 4-H Club work is educational and, therefore, a valid test of the potential success of a 4-H Club is the availability of educational experiences to all members.

A panel of nationally known educators and educational organization leaders was given the objectives of 4-H Club work and was asked to suggest all possible learning experiences that the 4-H Club organization might provide. The complete list of these learning experiences is

given in a mimeograph report published by the Federal Extension Service in May 1951, 897 (8-53), *Summary of the 4-H Club Teaching Objectives and Learning Experiences*, by Dr. Saul Bernstein and others.

The need for this kind of comparison of school and community clubs stemmed from a study of the results of an earlier study in West Virginia reported in Ward F. Porter's doctoral thesis, *The 4-H Club, An Organizational Analysis*, Harvard University, in 1951, and in Laurel K. Sabrosky's *Miscellaneous Publication No. 11, Agricultural Extension Service, West Virginia University*, in 1952. Findings from the 1951 study indicated that the community club was superior in most ways to the school club, based upon the customary standards of performance; among these are percentage of reenrollment, length of membership, number of years clubs are active, length of local club meetings, and attendance at county 4-H camp.

The authors felt that the two types of clubs might be so different in organization that measures used for the first study (1951) would be inadequate for realistic comparison. The second study (1953) was planned and carried out to compare the two kinds of clubs on a different basis, and, in doing so, to see if the customary measures might not be satisfactory, after all.

SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY 4-H CLUB? WHICH SHALL WE HAVE?

Whichever Type, Can We Improve It?

Laurel K. Sabrosky and Ward F. Porter, Jr.
Extension Analysts

4-H Clubs have been organized as school clubs as a part of school systems, and as community clubs as a part of community systems, ever since 4-H Club work started. 4-H Clubs of both types can be found, or were present recently, in every State of the Union. No matter which kind of club organization predominates in a county or a State, those responsible for 4-H Club work in that area wonder which kind of organization best fits their situation.

In the West Virginia study, 18 school 4-H Clubs were studied in one county; in that same county, 22 community 4-H Clubs were studied. By studying the two types of clubs in one county, some very important influences on 4-H programs were held the same for both types of clubs. Some of these influences were philosophy of the county ex-

tension staff; personalities, knowledge, abilities, and skills of the county extension staff members; resources available in the county; agricultural development of the county; and length of 4-H Club history in the county.

The two kinds of clubs had about the same range in number of members. The smallest for each was 5, and the largest for each was about 50. The proportion of boys to girls in each kind was about the same: 1 boy to 2 girls. The children in school clubs were, on the average, somewhat younger than boys and girls in community clubs, although both types had 10-year-olds and both had members up to 16 years of age or more. The two kinds of clubs varied as to how long the clubs had been active; school clubs had a larger share of first-year clubs than community clubs.

DID MEMBERS TAKE PART IN DIFFERENT NUMBER OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES?

Seventeen learning experiences are discussed in this leaflet. Each of them was offered to its members by at least one club of each type.

More community-club members than school-club members took part in five learning experiences:

Individual participation in community projects.
Money-raising activities.
Social activities.
Contests.
Club-officer experiences.

More school-club members than community-club members took part in only one learning experience:

Exhibiting project work to one or more kinds of audience.

Members of both types of clubs seemed to take part in the other 11 kinds of learning experiences to about the same extent, although in general the percentages favored the community clubs. These 11 were:

Being in a club which carried a community project.
Receiving individual recognition.
Demonstrations.
Attending camp.
Exhibiting more than once.
Completing a project.
Panel talkfest.
Plays, pageants.
Committee work.
Tour, field trip.
Judging.

Considering the learning experiences offered members, each 4-H Club was given a "learning-experience-score." The higher the score, the more opportunity the average club member apparently had for an educational experience in his 4-H work.

Community clubs had higher average learning-experience-scores than school clubs. This difference was true even when first-year clubs

were removed from the comparison (seven school clubs and one community club).

The significant difference between the two types of clubs, as to learning experiences, raises questions for 4-H Club program leaders to answer:

- Why do more members of community clubs take part in learning experiences, especially in the five listed on page 4?
- Can we organize and conduct school 4-H Clubs so that they can offer these learning experiences to as many members as do the community clubs?
- Are these five learning experiences important ones for the development and education of boys and girls?
- What about the one learning experience in favor of school clubs? Do we emphasize exhibiting because it is difficult to offer school club members the same learning experiences available to members of community clubs?
- Can we organize and conduct community clubs so that they can provide opportunity for exhibiting to as many members as do school clubs?

DO DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEMBERS RESPOND DIFFERENTLY?

Is the difference between numbers of learning opportunities provided by community and school clubs affected by the characteristics of individual members or their home situations?

In general, the characteristics of the boys and girls and their home situations were not related to the number of learning experiences they took part in. In neither kind of club in this county did size of

farm on which member lived, nor the major source of income of their families, affect the number of learning experiences the boys and girls took advantage of.

This finding carries real significance for 4-H Club work as a whole. It shows that 4-H can offer meaningful learning experiences to boys and girls from widely different backgrounds.

In some areas there have been signs that 4-H Club work offered more to commercial farm boys and girls than to small farm, marginal farm, or nonfarm young folks. Yet Barbour County farms are small and family income is modest. Even so, 4-H'ers gained meaningful experiences from club membership.

Another point: While size of farm and source of income had no effect on 4-H'ers learning experiences in Barbour County, do not assume that this is true of all counties.

Barbour County is homogenous. Its farms and families are much alike. Mining has been the basic industry throughout the county. Socioeconomic differences among 4-H'ers are small. Under such conditions 4-H'ers in both school and community clubs enjoyed almost the same number of learning experiences.

But what about heterogeneous counties—those with wide differences within the county in size of farms, sources and levels of incomes, and other socioeconomic conditions of families? Obviously these conditions must be considered in guiding 4-H Club work. But as Barbour County findings showed, club experience can be

meaningful to boys and girls from homes with modest incomes.

In both types of clubs, the more years of club work a member had had, the higher was his learning-experience score on the average. Likewise, the more help parents gave to a member, and to the 4-H Club, the higher was the member's learning-experience score. This latter was especially true in school clubs.

In West Virginia, mining is so important that a separate analysis was made. In the community clubs, members of nonmining families had higher average learning-experience scores than members of mining families. However, mining-family parents gave as much help to their children in 4-H Club work as did nonmining-family parents.

In community clubs, girls had much higher learning-experience scores than boys. This was not true in school clubs.

Members of community clubs whose "best friends" were not in the club had higher learning-experience scores than those whose "best friends" were in the club. Members whose "best friends" were not in the club were more likely to stay in 4-H Club work longer and to attend camp. It was also found that community club members who were not of the same general age as the other members of the club had just as high learning-experience scores as the members who were of the same age as their fellow members.

These findings should raise some questions concerning 4-H Club work in any county or State.

Where community-type clubs are customary, required, or desirable for other reasons, certain weaknesses in them should be corrected.

- Can we make more effort to provide more learning experiences for boys?

Present 4-H programs seem to appeal more to girls than to boys. We need to recognize the implication of the heterogeneous occupational outlook for boys as compared to the homogeneous housewife-homemaker outlook for girls.

- Can we plan both projects and nonproject activities to meet the needs of children from nonfarm homes?

This study shows that size of farm and major source of income need not be blocks to educational work in 4-H Clubs. Certainly, then, the occupation of the breadwinner of the family should have little or no effect.

- What about those members who stay in 4-H Club work when their best friends do not? And what about those members who apparently get along fine in clubs made up of members of a different age group?

These situations are contrary to the needs of youth, especially when they enter the teens. Other studies have shown that first-year 4-H Club members who are in clubs to which their best friends do not belong tend to drop out of club work. This study indicates that those who do reenroll, even though their best friends do not, are the most active in 4-H Club work.

Does community 4-H Club work attract boys and girls who do not follow the normal developmental pattern of youth? Or does it pull certain youth away from a pattern of life essential to their normal development? Do these boys and girls have ample opportunity, outside of 4-H Club work, to be with their peer group? This situation would need to be studied, club by club.

Where school clubs are customary, required, or desirable for other reasons, we need to consider the problem of help given individual members.

- Parental help given to individual members naturally is related to the learning-experience scores these members received. This relationship was higher for school clubs than community clubs.

This finding suggests that parents who cannot or are unwilling to help their children are a greater handicap in school clubs than in community clubs. As 4-H Club program leaders, we should recognize this problem and plan how help can be given these members.

Regardless of the organizational pattern, these questions have been raised by this study:

- How can we offer more learning experiences to those members with few years of 4-H Club work?

New members need just as many learning experiences as older members, even though learning experiences of older members, would logically have

more depth. Other studies show that first-year members are likely to drop out of 4-H Club work during or after their first year because of lack of learning experiences. This should challenge us to provide more learning experiences for new members.

- How can we make more learning experiences available to

those members whose parents cannot, or are unwilling to help their children or the clubs to which they belong? It is good that parents do help, and it is good that this help improves the experiences their children have in 4-H Club work. However, Extension Service has equal responsibility to all children.

ARE CLUB AND PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO MEMBERS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES?

Certain characteristics of 4-H Clubs and ways the clubs function affected the number of learning experiences offered individual members. Some of these characteristics and functions affected the school club more than they did the community clubs.

The general age level of the members did not seem to affect the number of learning experiences in either type of club.

There was a strong relationship between learning-experience scores and percentage of project completion, percentage of members attending camp, and percentage of reenrollment. This relationship is to be expected for project completion and camp attendance, as they were two of the factors included in the learning-experience score.

4-H program leaders should be greatly interested in the fact that the more learning experiences the individual members take part in, the more likely they are to reenroll in 4-H Club work.

The size of the club seemed to have no effect on the educational possibilities of the club.

The learning-experience scores for school clubs were closely related to how long the clubs had been active. The data do not show such a relation for the community clubs, but this may be caused by the lack of first-year community clubs in the county which limited analysis of data. After the first year, both types of clubs may settle into a routine that offers a good number of learning experiences.

What went on in the regular local 4-H Club meeting definitely affected the learning-experience score of the club. Whether or not individuals took some part in the "opening exercises" in the club meetings was of little importance to the learning experiences as a whole. However, the more the club as a group took part in "opening exercises," such as singing together and giving the flag salute and the 4-H pledge, the higher went the learning-experience score

for the club. Increased group participation had more effect on learning-experience scores in school clubs than in community clubs.

In community clubs, the more items included in the routine business meeting part of the club meeting, the *better* it was for the educational experiences of the members.

In school club meetings, the more routine business items that were included in the club-meeting program, the *fewer* the learning experiences for the club members. Here we probably see the effect of limited time for school club meetings. When too much time is spent on routine business, too little time is left for anything else.

Both types of clubs were better off if members spent more time in decision-making during the business meeting. School clubs especially showed this relationship, although *too* much time spent on it reduced the learning-experience scores.

Another concern is the relationship of number of meetings in which project work is taught to number of learning experiences. For school clubs the data indicated that no more than one such meeting was best to provide most learning experiences. In community clubs two or three such meetings seemed like the best number, although this was not definitely proved.

Learning experiences of school club members increased when more meetings were held at which members gave demonstrations. The data showed no such relationship for community clubs.

Points of interest stand out from these data :

- Members of 4-H Clubs, whether community or school, have more learning experiences if the programs are not confined to a few objectives or activities, such as project work, community-service, recreation, or formal club meetings only.
- A high percentage of 4-H Clubs do not last, thus requiring the forming of new clubs. This situation handicaps an effective, educational 4-H Club program.
- Program leaders of school 4-H Clubs should consider shortening parts of the meeting program, such as routine business and opening exercises in which only one member performs at a time. This will help to provide more time for all members to have a larger variety of learning experiences.
- Members of community clubs need more formal business in their meetings. They also need to take more part in meeting activities which involve the whole group.
- When more than an absolute minimum of time is given to project teaching at club meetings, members do not have adequate learning experiences. This fact should be of real concern to 4-H Club program leaders. The project has been, and still is the major core of 4-H Club work.

Who would teach the 4-H Club member how to do his project work, and where would this teaching be done, if such

teaching in club meetings reduces the possible effectiveness of 4-H Club work?

We suggest that meetings held only once a month cannot provide 4-H members the opportunity to reach the many 4-H Club objectives, especially in school clubs where meeting time is limited by the school schedule.

We would like to summarize and pinpoint the findings described in this section as we see them:

- Any 4-H Club may well have too few or too many objectives for the success of that club.
- At the beginning of the year, the 4-H Club should decide which of the many possible objectives it wants to reach that year, and plan its program around those objectives.
- Then, all methods and activities in the program should be planned during the year so that each member can frequently take an active part in them.

ARE LOCAL LEADER PROBLEMS DIFFERENT?

Local 4-H Club leaders for community clubs spent much more time on 4-H Club work than local 4-H leaders for school clubs. The former spent much more time for and with their local clubs; the latter spent more time on exhibits, fairs, and camps involving more than one club.

We found that age, sex, and 4-H Club experience of leaders had no relationship to the learning-experience scores of the clubs they led.

Two factors affecting club leadership are closely related: (1) Turnover or frequency of change of club leaders, and (2) stability or length of time the present leader had been with the club. Both were also closely related to learning-experience scores of club members. The more stable the leadership, the higher the learning-experience scores.

The more time local 4-H leaders spent at regular club meetings, on planning club programs, on help-

ing individual members, and on working with community adult counselors (one to three per community), the higher were the clubs' learning-experience scores. This was true regardless of type of club.

This effect was felt more strongly in school clubs than in community clubs. The more time school-club local leaders spent at special 4-H meetings, the higher the learning-experience scores. These special 4-H meetings probably offered opportunities that regular school-club meetings did not have time to offer. The more time school-club local leaders spent on exhibits, the lower the learning-experience scores.

The amount of time spent by local 4-H leaders at training meetings, regardless of type of club they led, was not related to learning-experience scores of their clubs. Neither was time they spent making home and project visits related to learning-experience scores.

As a professional 4-H Club worker you may have both school and community clubs in your area. Obviously, as you've noticed, the responsibilities, functioning, and perhaps training of local leaders for each type of club may be different. This study indicated that what local leaders of both types of clubs did affected the opportunities members had in their clubs.

Let's think about these points:

- It is interesting that the leader's past 4-H Club experience had no bearing on the effectiveness of his club. The possibility that past experience could have been bad or good might be the reason. The data suggest that past 4-H experience, which has not been evaluated, should not be a standard for selecting a local 4-H Club leader.
- The more time leaders spent on local work (regular meetings, individual help, planning programs, and working with adult counselors), the more effective the 4-H Club tended to be. This means that we have not yet reached the point where all 4-H Club members are receiving all the help and time they need from local 4-H leaders.
- If the good of all is the goal, it is possible that leaders give too much help to a few members. Data show that the more time school-club local leaders spent on exhibits, the fewer total learning experiences their club

members took part in. Too much time given to any one part of the 4-H program by local leaders apparently works against the total program.

- 4-H Club program leaders, State or county, should be concerned to realize that time spent at training meetings is not related to learning-experiences the club members participate in. Training may not have been aimed at needs of the leaders in their local clubs and communities. Perhaps it was either too specific or too general, or maybe it did not help the leaders to be more effective as persons.
- Leaders spent little time making home and project visits, especially school-club leaders. In fact, visits must have been limited to a very few of the members. These visits may have been effective in terms of the objectives of each visit, but time was not used effectively for the good of all members.
- Sex of local leaders apparently did not affect learning-experience scores of 4-H Clubs. Women local leaders provide just as many learning experiences for their club members as men leaders. At the same time it is important to call attention to the ratio of one boy to two girls in the clubs. It is possible that this ratio is due to having more women local leaders than men.

Summary

Both community and school 4-H Clubs have advantages and problems.

Community 4-H Clubs tend to provide their individual members with a wider variety of learning experiences than school 4-H Clubs.

Objectives for any 4-H Club should be set up to recognize the type of club organization that exists.

Specific goals cannot be just the same for community clubs as for school clubs.

The time available for regular club meetings is different for the two types. Therefore, the same things cannot be accomplished in regular meetings of the two types of clubs. Additional special meetings need to be held for school clubs.

Local 4-H Club leaders must function differently in the two types of clubs. As a result, the training program for leaders of the two types of clubs needs to have different content, and, to some extent, different objectives.